M.R.O. 1—77,000—8-6-37.

(1) Number of pages 32

(2) Date of repair 25-8-42.

(3) Initials of the Referencer

# MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

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## Government of Madras.

Public Works DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 2908 Press ~~Mis.~~

131-132

Dated 6-10- 1863.

**Not to be folded or roughly handled**

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department, 6th October* 1863.

No. 131. Read the following letter from Captain F. J. MOBERLY, R. E., Superintending Engineer, 8th Division, to Colonel C. A. ORR, R. E., Secretary to Government, Public Works Department, dated Madura, 21st September 1863, No. 707 :—

SIR,

4 Original letters.
1 List of rates.

1. I have the honor to enclose letters from the Collectors and late District Engineers of Madura and Tinnevelly in reply to G. O. No. 1,955 of 20th July last.

2. Except Mr. Silver these Officers agree with me as to the necessity for raising the rates. Mr. Silver's argument, however, supports me; for the rates which he has entered are not my average rates, but maximum prices which have been paid; the data on which my Estimates are founded allow 2 and 2½ Annas per Cooly and 4½ to 6 Annas per Bricklayer, 3 and 4 Annas to the one and 6 to 8 Annas to the other, add therefore really 50 per cent.; the return from my Office was, I observe, likely to mislead Mr. Silver.

3. I take the opportunity of remarking that these Districts have been particularly fortunate in the past and current year; high prices for Cotton have more than compensated for the inferior crops caused by the frequent and genial rains, which have largely benefited all other cultivation; much of the produce is however exported, and consequently prices keep up.

4. The returns of prices of grain will show this, as would also, till quite lately, the increased revenue of Tinnevelly under the Ulunga system, only recently abandoned.

5. The members of the Department Public Works are as far as I can see, anxious to get work done, but it is most discouraging to find themselves outbidden at every turn—everything under Government Estimates is lingering on.

6. I beg to instance the road to Tutacorin, undertaken on contract by Messrs. Cocq & Co., to which the Collector refers in his last paragraph. I believe that they have lost by the contract, although the delay has been caused, as I believe, solely by their employing people at odd times, when they had no other work on hand, and consequently at lower rates than usually prevailed.

7. To the same cause is to be attributed the miserable process of building the Government School, and carrying out the water project in Madura town; nobody will undertake a contract, for he intends to keep himself free to go to any private employer.

8. I believe that the only remedy is to raise our prices, even above the market value, to bribe as it were Contractors to come forward; when a healthy competition has sprung up, prices will go down.

9. Building is going on in Madura town, the large villages in the Districts both of Madura and Tinnevelly and on the Pulny's, and there is a great demand for skilled labour on the Ceylon Railway. I was misled in believing that so many people had emigrated from Tinnevelly to Ceylon; but there is no report as to the numbers that have gone to the Coffee Plantations in Travancore.

10. I will not discuss Mr. Silver's letter in detail, as I think it mainly supports my views, the mistake being corrected between average and maximum rates. I enclose a few prices as now entered in Estimates which I am called on to execute.

11. As regards the procuring of labour at Tutacorin and Courtalam I would however observe, that there is a broad expanse of sand around Tutacorin, with a few scattered villages, the inhabitants of whom are employed in fishing, or on the Salt Pans; that inland of the sand are Cotton plantations of the Eetyaporum Zemindar, whose Ryots are little better than slaves of his.

12. That at Courtalam the Coolies bring in large bundles of firewood for sale is a fact which I know from my own observation, and to which my attention was called by Captain Paxton, late District Engineer of Tinnevelly; by Captain Payne, formerly Assistant and afterwards District Engineer Tinnevelly, and Mr. Levinge, formerly Sub-Collector of Tinnevelly, in whose charge Courtalam was for some years.

13. It is impossible for the small number of members of the Department to pay regularly and punctually small bodies of daily labourers, dotted about over the Ranges; if money be given to the road Maistries, as Mr. Silver proposes, there is opening for much fraud.

## *Proceedings of the Madras Government, Public Works Department, 6th October* 1863.

14. To introduce a good system of contracts, we must pay people such a price as will induce them to run the risk of runaway Coolies, inferior labour, &c., and until they have made their own workmen, got some capital and plant, and can afford to compete by lowering their tenders.

15. Another point on which I shall enter more fully when I have the materials to reply to G. O. No. 1,918 of 16th July 1863; I will only mention here, of Rupees 4,624-4-2 outstanding in the Presidency Rupees 3,135-8-0 are due by Madura Contractors, men who would undertake work at low prices, only on condition that they receive advances, which I have now strictly forbidden.

16. These men have from various causes failed to fulfil their contracts, several suits have been instituted and others must be commenced; the consequence is that nobody will come forward to undertake work, and nothing is done (besides repair of irrigation works in which the Ryots are interested) except under the immediate eye of the Range Officer or Overseer.

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No. 132. ORDER THEREON, 6th October 1863, No. 2,908.

1. To enable the Government to pass orders on the above letter the Superintending Engineer, 8th Division, will be so good as to submit Abstract Estimates at revised rates for all works now in progress, the rates allowed in the sanctioned Estimates being noted in each case of revision.

2. The Government would remind Captain Moberly that a step of the nature he proposes, involving a permanent increased charge to the State, should not be taken without the most careful consideration on his part, and the fullest accord of the Civil authorities.

3. Captain Moberly will at the same time furnish the information called for in paragraph 5 of G. O. of 20th July 1863, No. 1,955, as to the particular works he would propose to suspend and to carry out.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) CHARLES A. ORR, Colonel, R. E.,
*Secretary to Government.*

To the Superintending Engineer, 8th Division.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

No. 263. Tinnevelly Collector's
Circuit Cutcherry
Tenkasy 15th September 1863

From
J. Silver Esqre.
Collector

To Captain F. J. Moberly R.E.
Superintending Engineer 8th Division
Madura

Sir,

In reply to your letter without date annexed to the order of Government of 20th July 1863 No. 1955 recorded on your letter to the late Secretary to Government Department Public Works, dated 4th July 1863, and to your letter to me with enclosure dated the 15th Ultimo, I have the honor to inform you, that I consider the rates you pay to work people in this District, to be generally ample,

comparing

comparing them with the rates paid by private individuals, and that I differ entirely from you in the opinion you Express, of there being any necessity to Raise these rates, 50 per Cent.

2 I have made Enquiries on this subject in different Quarters of the District, and the delay in Receiving some of these replies, has been the cause of my not answering your letter earlier.

3 I find you pay in all the Ranges but the 4th, Coolies at the rate of 3 Annas per diem, and in the 4th Range you pay them at the rate of 4 Annas per diem. These are higher average rates of wages than are paid to Coolies by private individuals, and if

the

6A

the Range Officers exert them-selves to procure labor, and take measures to see that the Coolies are fully and punctually paid at these rates, by Maistries and others immediately superintend-ing them, I do not think there would be any lack of labor, at these rates.

4 The two places where Cooly hire is reported to be the highest, is Streevilliputtoor and Tuticorin. At the first place Cooly hire is stated to vary from 3-4. to 4 Annas per diem, and at Tuti-corin 4 or 5 Annas per diem. This last named place however is exceptional, you will not be able to obtain labor from the screws in the town itself, but Mr Underwood the Deputy Collector informs

informs me, that abundance of labor can be engaged from the neighbouring villages.

5 As regards Bricklayers whom you pay at from 6 to 8 Annas per diem, in no part of the District where I have made enquiries, are higher rates than these paid. Even in Tuticorin, where the cost of labor is high, bricklayers do not receive more than 8 Annas, and the same in Streevilliputtoor, the two dearest places for all labor. For a particular work like the Sattoor bridge, where it is necessary to get bricklayers to come from a distance, it would be necessary to give some extra remuneration; for example bricklayers from Streevilliputtoor

ask

ask 12 Annas a day, to go and work on the Sattoor bridge. From Tinnevelly bricklayers to proceed to the Sattoor bridge, ask from 8 to 10 Annas per diem, 2 Annas per diem for the time they are unemployed, and Rupee one for travelling expense. At Tinnevelly itself, bricklayers can be engaged at from 5 to 6 Annas per diem, at Sankernainarcoil from 4 to 6, at Streevilliputtoor from 6 to 8. Your general rates therefore are certainly sufficient.

6 I will now advert to the points referred to in your demi official note of the 18th Ultimo, consequent on our conversation, regarding the rates paid for Cooly labor at Courtallum, where as you know, it is greatly in demand. I informed you that

Coolies

Coolies worked in the Coffee Gardens at from as. p. 2-6, to as. p. 2-8 per diem, and you wished me to enquire regarding the continuance of their engagement, the number of hours they worked, and whether they did not collect a bundle of firewood the price of which added to their day's hire.

7 I have made all these Enquiries. Coolies who go up the Hill and return in the evening, begin their work about 9 A.M., and leave off at 4½ P.M., and they receive as. p. 2-6 per diem. Coolies who remain on the Gardens, begin their work an hour or two earlier, leave off at the same time, and receive as. p. 2-8 per diem. The period of their engagement is generally 15 days, after which they are free to leave, or enter on

a

a new engagement. Three Annas are sometimes given to the best Coolies who understand pruning the Coffee bushes, and to those who work well with the axe in felling forest, and on one Estate I was told as. p. 3-4 were given to the best of that class of men, but that was the highest. The average Cooly wages was from as. p. 2-6 to as. p. 2-8 per diem, and I consider that this may be taken as the average rate for the whole District. As regards the firewood, the Coolies returning occasionally pick up a few sticks to boil their rice, but not to sell. All the above remarks in this letter, refer to Cooly adults; women and Children are paid proportionately less, and your

your rates at $1^{a}$-$8^{p}$ to $2^{as}$, are ample.

8 You further remarked in this note, that I had said that Rupees 4 a month was miserable pay for a tappal runner. Certainly it is. it is at the rate of $2^{a}$. $1\frac{1}{2}^{p}$ per diem, and you will get a hundred men to work on a road at 3 Annas a day, for every one man, the post Office could engage at the above rate. You further remarked that 3 Annas is the rate in this District for a Cooly carrying a load 10 miles, and you assumed that 4½ Annas was therefore the day's hire, because the man should go 15 miles, which you had found from experiments to be the case.

If

11A

If a Cooly carrying a full load on his head, travels 10 miles, he has I think done a fair days work, for he has the 10 miles to return.

9 I fear there is much truth in your remark, that the roads and public Works in Tinnevelly are very bad, as compared with other Districts, but to remedy this it is not needed that rates already sufficiently high should be raised half as high again. It appears to me you have the remedy in your own hands, and that if the Range Officers Exert themselves to procure labor, and take measures to ensure full and regular payment to the Coolies, I cannot see any Reason why

these

these Coolies should not be glad to get employment from the Government, at as high or higher rates, than they would receive from private individuals. As for your supposition that 50,000 men emigrated from Tinnevelly to Ceylon in a year, you are altogether mistaken, the entire number, men women and children who emigrated last Official year was only 15,359.

10 You refer also to a portion of the Cotton Road, which was undertaken to be made by Mr. Coag of Tuticorin, and which was so long delayed. Certainly that cannot be attributed to any scarcity of labor, and the penalty incurred by Mr. Coag should in my opinion, have long ago

been

13A

been enforced, and the Road completed by your Department. The matter was a small one to Mr. Coss, and the forfeiture of the penalty would have been a matter of comparative in-difference to him.

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your most Obed. Servt.

[signature]
Collector

Comp. A. C.

1863 Deptt (3) 108

From
The Collector of
To Tinnevelly
The Supg Engineer
8th Division
Madura
Dated 15th Septr 1863
Recd No. Da
PW 3900 No. 3/63
Enc: None
No.

Informing that the rates paid by the Public works Deptt to the work people in the Distt of Tinnevelly are sufficient.

15A No. 518 Madura
27th August /63

From
V. H. Levinge Esqre.
Collector of Madura

To
Captain J. J. Moberly R.E.
Superintending Engineer
8 Division
Tinnevelly

Sir,

In reply to your letter No. 248 dated 29th July appended to Proceedings of Government No. 1955 dated 20th July, I have the honor to inform you that from enquiries I have made I can confidently say that all kinds of labor & that the cost of materials used in the construction of buildings has
advanced

advanced 50 per cent and more in some instances in the last 2 years.

2 The rise in the price of agricultural produce, activity and profits in trade, have been so great of late years that in every direction substancial and good houses are being built which has caused a great rise in building materials, in cart hire & in masons &ca wages - and many Coolies have given up working for hire and taken to cultivating as an easier and more profitable occupation

Emigration from the District has also increased & it is very certain that the wages of Coolies have gone up from 2 Annas which it was last year to 3 Annas & even that rate fails to tempt Coolies to seek work, there is on all hands a complaint of a difficiency of procuring labor

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your most Obt Servt
H [illegible]
Collector

Esd [illegible] 174

(3)

1863 Departt

[illegible] 3900/63 1085

From

The Collector of

Madura

To The Supt Engr.

8th Division

Dated 27th } August
Recd. } 1863

No. 5 18

Informing that from the Enquiries difficiency in procuring it appears that all kinds of labor is felt owing to the laborers sought their occupation in cultivaty

Palamcottah
8th August 1863

From
Captain L. Paxton
Executive Engineer Tinn.

To
Captain F. J. Moberly
Superintending Engineer
8th Division

Sir,

With reference to your request for further information regarding the increased rates rendered necessary by the advanced prices of labor and materials in the Tinnevelly District I have the honor to point out the following as the chief causes leading to the rapid rise for work of all kinds now taking place.

1 Agents have been sent from Ceylon to collect laborers and Artificers of all kinds for the Ceylon Railway the wages offered by them being more than double the rates paid to similar workmen in this District. This has only been the case for the past two months so that the exact increase of rates can not yet be predicted with accuracy.

I am inclined to think however that at least one half more than the wages paid at present will be required to keep the laborers from proceeding to Ceylon in those parts of the District most accessible to the Railway Agents.

II The increased growth of Cotton in some parts of the District influences the rate of bandy hire, a large number of Carts being required to convey the Cotton to the coast for export. this has been the case in the Sattur Taluq and has led to a considerable increase in the cost of the Bridge at Sattur.

III In the Thenkasi Taluq the in=creased growth of coffee and the high rates of pay given to Coolies especially in the crop=ping season has for some time past rendered it difficult to obtain labor at existing prices in that Taluq and con=siderable difficulty has been experienced in carrying out work.

IV To the above may be added that there is a general tendency of prices to rise from the increased exports and greater amount of wealth in the District

List of Rates in the Madura and Tinnevelly Districts as now entered in Estimate.

23A

| Description of materials and workmen | | Rate | | | Per |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brick in chunam | at | 2 | 4 | " | Cubic yard |
| Brick in Clay | at | 1 | 8 | " | Do. |
| Cut stone in chunam | at | 7 | " | " | Do. |
| Circular Arch work | at | 2 | 12 | " | Cubic yard |

Supg Engineers Office
8th Divn Madura
21 September 1863

J. Mudberly Captain R. E.
Supg Engineer 8th Division

(3) 1083

Tinnevelly

P W 3900/63

From
The Executive Engineer
Tinnevelly
to
The Sup^g Engineer S^n D^n
No

Dated 8^th } August 1863
Rec^d — }

Enclosure None

Gives certain informa=tion regarding the rapid rise in the price of Labor and Materials in the Tinnevelly District

914

arising from them.

I have &c.

J. Tanton Captain

Executive Engineer

Tinnevelly

(3)

Enclo: in a letter from the Supg: Engr: 8th Divn. No. 707 dated the 21st September 1862.

To

The Secy. to Govt.

D.P.W.

Nº 3900/to

List of Rates in the Madura and Tinnevelly Districts as now entered in Estimate.

Supg. Engineers Office 8th Divn.
Madura 21 September 1863 25A

No. 707

From
Captain J. J. Moberly R. E.
Supg. Engineer 8th Division

To
Colonel C. A. Orr R. E.
Secy to Government P. W. D.

Sir,

Public
Enclo: 5
4 original letters
1 List of rates

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the contract, although the delay has been caused, as I believe, solely by their employing people at odd times, when they had no other work on hand, and consequently at lower rates than usually prevailed.

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10 I will not discuss Mr. Silver's letter in detail, as I think it mainly supports my views, the mistake being corrected between average and maximum rates. I enclose a few prices as now entered in estimates which I am called on to execute.

11 As regards the procuring of labour at Tuticorin and Courtalam I would however observe; that there is a broad expanse of sand around Tuticorin, with a few scattered villages, the inhabitants of whom are employed in fishing, or on the salt pans; that inland of the sand are cotton plantations of the Ettyapoorum Zemindar, whose ryots are little better than slaves of his.

12 That at Courtalam the Coolies bring in large bundles of firewood for sale is a fact which I know from my own observation, and to which my attention

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394

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13 It is impossible for the small number of members of the Department, to pay regularly and punctually, small bodies of daily labourers dotted about over the ranges - if money be given to the road maistries, as Mr. Silver proposes, there is opening for much fraud.

14 To introduce a good system of contracts, we must pay people such a price as will induce them to run the risk of runaway coolies, inferior labour, and until they have made their own workmen, got some capital and plant, and can afford to complete by lowering their tenders.

15 Another point on which I shall enter more fully when I have the materials to reply to G. O. No. 1918 of 16th July 1863

2

I will only mention here; of Rs. 4624-4-2 outstanding in the Presidency Rs. 3135-8-" are due by Madura Contractors - men who would undertake work at low prices, only on condition that they received advances, which I have now strictly forbidden -

16 These men have from various causes failed to fulfil their contracts - several suits have been instituted and others must be commenced. the consequence is that no body will come forward to undertake work and nothing is done (besides repair of irrigation works in which the ryots interested) except under the immediate eye of the Range Officer or Overseer -

I have &c.

T. J. Moberly Captain R. E.
Supg Engineer 8th Division

Rec. 16th July/63 at 391-392
" 20th ——— 472-473

No 7 P W 1863 Depth
Pro: of Govt for October.
No 2900

From
The Supg: Engineer
8th Divn.

To
The Secy: to Govt.
D.P.W.

Dated 21st } Septr/63
Recd. 28th }

Enc 5.

Encloses letters from the Collectors and late District Engineers of Madura & Tinnevelly in reply to G.O. No 1955 of 26th July last regarding the raising of rates in the 8th Division.

Nos 131-132.

No 2908 - 6th October.

No 2908.

To enable the Govt. to pass orders on the above letter the Supg. Engr. 8th Dn. will be so good as to submit Abstract Estimates at revised rates for all works now in progress, the rates allowed in the sanctioned Estimates being noted in each case of revision.

2. The Govt. would remind Captn. Moberly that a step of the nature he proposes, ~~[illegible]~~ involving a permanent increased charge to the State, should not be taken without the most careful consideration on his part, & the fullest accord of the Civil Authorities.

3. Captain Moberly will at the same time furnish the information called for in para 5 of G.O. of 20th July/63 No. 1955 as to the particular works he would propose to suspend & to carry out.

To the Supg. Engr. 8th Dn. — Chepauk, 6th Octr/63 — [signature]
Despd. 7th October.